



COST is an intergovernmental framework for European Cooperation in Science and Technology established to initiate networking and coordination of nationally funded research activities on a European level. It facilitates bringing good scientists together under light strategic guidance based on networks, called COST Actions, centered around research projects in fields that are of interest to COST countries and those with reciprocal agreements with COST (New Zealand, South Africa and Argentina).

## **COST Action ES1104**

### **Arid Lands Restoration and Combat of Desertification**

COST Action ES1104 focuses on practical measures that can be used by practitioners, stakeholders and authorities to restore degraded drylands and manage their recovery. It will run from June 2012 to May 2016. This networking Action has its origins in the European Union but its remit is to galvanize action and innovation within and beyond EU borders. The action welcomes participation and collaboration in this endeavor to create a global 'one stop shop' for the dissemination of knowledge and solutions to people in arid lands, and also creates opportunities for education and innovation through Short-Term Scientific Missions and Training Schools.

#### **ES1104 - Funding for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) 2013-2014**

Financial support may be provided to eligible applicants to carry out a STSM that will specifically contribute to the scientific objectives of this COST Action. STSMs facilitate scientists going to an institution or laboratory in another 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. Early Stage Researchers (up to 8 years after award of a PhD) will be given priority.

#### **Eligibility**

Applicants should be graduate students, post-docs, or early stage researchers, and must either be enrolled in or affiliated to

- a) an institution located in a Participating COST country having accepted the Memorandum of Understanding of this Action (Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom); or
- b) an approved institution in a Near Neighbour country (National Academy of Sciences Center for Ecological-Noosphere Studies, Armenia; Al Hussein Bin Talal University, Jordan; Al-Quds University, Palestinian Authority; Ibn Zohr University, Morocco; Institut des Régions Arides, Tunisia).

There is also an opportunity for applicants from Participating COST countries to undertake STSMs to approved institutions in International Partner Countries (University of New South Wales, Australia; North West University, South Africa; Gobabeb Training and Research Centre, Namibia; Instituto Argentino de Investigaciones de las Zonas Aridas, Argentina).

Note that the applicant and host must be from two different countries. The nationality of the applicant is not a bar to eligibility.

### **Duration of an STSM**

STSMs are a minimum of one week (5 working days) and up to a maximum 3 months. An Early Stage Researcher (up to 8 years after award of a PhD) can request a period of up to 6 months.

### **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 Action Chair/STSM Coordinator or Committee. 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 is based on the following rules:

- The reimbursement rate per day is EUR 160 maximum;
- Up to EUR 500 may be attributed for travel expenses;
- A **maximum EUR 2,500** in total can be afforded to the grantee.

The calculation for an Early Stage Researcher STSM for a duration of more than 91 days is 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 EUR 3,500** in total can be afforded to the grantee.

### **Possible STSM scenarios:**

1. From a Participating COST country to another Participating COST country. COST countries currently participating in this Action are Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom.
2. From a Participating COST country to an approved institution in an International Partner country. Approved institutions in International Partner countries are currently:
  - a) The University of New South Wales (Australia)
  - b) North West University (South Africa)
  - c) Gobabeb Training and Research Centre (Namibia)
  - d) Instituto Argentino de Investigaciones de las Zonas Aridas (Argentina)
3. From a Participating COST country to an approved institution in a Near Neighbour country. Approved institutions in Near Neighbour countries are currently:
  - a) The National Academy of Sciences Center for Ecological-Noosphere Studies (Armenia)
  - b) Al Hussein Bin Talal University (Jordan)
  - c) Al-Quds University (Palestinian Authority)
  - d) Ibn Zohr University (Morocco)
  - e) Institut des Régions Arides (Tunisia)
4. From an approved institution in a Near Neighbour country to a Participating COST country

### **Application procedures for an STSM**

1. Obtain the written agreement of the host scientist before submitting his/her application. It is essential that the applicant outline in detail to the host scientist what they would like to do for the STSM, provide a CV, provide the host scientist with the Action web site (<http://desertrestorationhub.com>), and to convince the host scientist that the proposed STSM fits into the Action goals.
2. Complete the online application form (<https://e-services.cost.eu/w3/index.php?id=91>). Note that the on-line system only has room for abbreviated CVs and work plans. The on-line registration tool will create a formal STSM application file, which the applicant can download.
3. Send the application file as an e-mail attachment to the Action Chair (B.Kotzen@greenwich.ac.uk) and the STSM coordinator (berkowi@vms.huji.ac.il) together with the following supporting documents: CV (max 2 pages), full work plan (between 2-5 pages), list of publications, a letter of motivation by the applicant with a detailed explanation about how the STSM will contribute to the Action ES1104 aims (important), letter of agreement by the host scientist to accept and supervise the applicant to the STSM host institution.

The application will be reviewed and, if approved, an acceptance letter containing the level of financial support will be e-mailed to the applicant. The most important criterion of assessment is how effectively the STSM will contribute to the scientific aims of Action ES1104. The review is usually quick and can be expected within 3 weeks.

NOTE: For the period of the STSM, neither the Grant Holder the Action, Management Committee of the Action, etc., nor the COST Office may be considered as the employer of the grantee, and grantees must make their own arrangements for all health insurance, travel insurance, social security, personal security and pension matters as may be needed and appropriate to the Grantee.

### **After the STSM**

The grantee is required to submit a short scientific report to the host scientist, the Action Chair and the STSM coordinator for approval within 30 days after the end date of the STSM, and should contain:

- Cover page with applicant name, affiliation address, e-mail, name of the host scientist and institute
- Purpose of the STSM;
- Description of the work carried out during the STSM;
- Description of the main results obtained;
- Future collaboration with the host institution (if applicable);
- Foreseen publications/articles resulting from the STSM (if applicable);
- A letter of confirmation by the host scientist of the successful execution of the STSM;
- Other comments (if any).

The Action Chair and STSM coordinator are responsible for approving the scientific report. The failure to submit the scientific report within 30 days will effectively cancel the grant. Once approved, payment of the STSM grant will be made by bank-to-bank transfer to the grantee.

Publications resulting from STSM activities should acknowledge COST ES1104 support. A copy must be sent the Action Chair.

### **Reciprocal STSM (RSTSM)**

The aim of the RSTSM is to enhance the potential impact of global networking and foster knowledge creation and exchange between scientists in COST Actions with host institutions in IPC that benefiting from a reciprocal agreement with COST (Argentina, New Zealand, South Africa). The reciprocal agreement (COST 4115/13) is based on the ascertained mutual benefit to network (in particular to the benefit of ESRs). Each institution, with the signature of a reciprocal agreement with the COST Office, has allocated dedicated funds to support the participation of researchers from their countries in COST Actions. For Actions with an approved IPC Institution in a country benefiting from a reciprocal agreement, the following scenarios are possible: RSTSM are implemented by the COST Office as a special kind of STSM funded in addition to the Action's Budget and managed centrally by the COST Office.

### **Possible RSTSM scenarios**

1. From a Participating COST country to an approved institution in a reciprocal International Partner country.
2. From an approved institution in a reciprocal International Partner country to a Participating COST country.

Approved institutions in reciprocal International Partner countries are currently:

- a) North West University (South Africa)
- b) Instituto Argentino de Investigaciones de las Zonas Aridas (Argentina)

### **RSTSM financial support**

An RSTSM grant is a fixed contribution based on the budget requested by the Applicant and on the evaluation of the application by the COST Office. This grant will not necessarily cover all expenses and only contribute towards travel and subsistence.

Financial contributions calculation rules for a RSTSM in South Africa:

- The reimbursement rate per day is EUR 160 maximum;
- Up to EUR 1 400 may be attributed for the travel expenses;
- Maximum EUR 2 500 can be afforded to the grantee.

Financial contributions calculation rules for a RSTSM in Argentina:

- The reimbursement rate per day is EUR 160 maximum;
- Up to EUR 1 000 may be attributed for the travel expenses;
- Maximum EUR 2 500 can be afforded to the grantee.

### **Application procedure for an RSTSM**

Follow the Procedures for a STSM (above). RSTSMs require the approval of the COST Office thus reviewing time may take longer.

Informal enquiries can be made to the STSM Coordinator Simon Berkowicz (berkowi@vms.huji.ac.il), with cc to Action Chair Benz Kotzen (b.kotzen@gre.ac.uk) and Project Manager Sarah Milliken (s.milliken@gre.ac.uk).