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**COST Action CA20122 Harmonis@tion**  
**Short Term Scientific Missions 4<sup>th</sup> Call**

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The 4<sup>th</sup> call for the Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSM) applications for Missions occurring until 31/08/2025 is open. Deadline for applications to be submitted: 01/02/2025. The STSMs need to contribute to the scientific objectives of one or more Harmonis@tion Working Groups (WG).

### About this Action

Adrenal tumours affect more than 3% of the population aged > 50 years, and their absolute prevalence is increasing due to population aging. Most of these tumours are benign and hormonally inactive. However, 2-10% of them are at risk of malignancy, and 20-40% present hormone oversecretion, leading to significant morbidity.

Management of adrenal tumours is quite heterogeneous, and this leads to substantial inequality in patient care throughout Europe. In this context, the goal of Harmonis@tion is to constitute a multidisciplinary network to harmonize clinical care and research on adrenal tumours throughout Europe. Our focus is on COST Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs). In addition, this collaborative network will establish a modern framework to develop a new generation of real-time and real-life randomized clinical trials, which will be federated, and registry based. For this purpose, Harmonis@tion is organized in five Working Groups: 1. Harmonizing clinical practice for adrenal tumours; 2. Harmonizing adrenal tumour research and -omics practice; 3. Harmonizing Information Technology (IT)/Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools towards a standardized registry; 4. Harmonizing the ethical and legal framework required for federated European trials; and 5. Communication, dissemination, and inclusiveness.

The successful execution of Harmonis@tion's goals is guaranteed by the collaboration of clinicians, researchers, and experts from other relevant fields, including AI, data science data protection, legal and ethical issues, and patients' representatives.

More details and Action Scientific Objectives are available on Action webpages: (<https://www.goharmonisation.com/about-us/>).



## Background STSMs

STSM aim to support individual mobility, strengthen the existing networks, and foster collaborations by allowing scientists to visit an institution or a laboratory in another Participating COST Country, or in approved COST Near Neighbor Countries (NNC) Institution or in approved International Partners Countries (IPC) institution. STSM should specifically contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action, 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. STSM applicants must be engaged in an official research programme as a PhD Student or postdoctoral fellow or can be employed by, or affiliated to, an Institution or legal entity which has within its remit a clear association with performing research. The institutions/organisations where applicants pursue their main strand of research are considered as Home institutions/organisations. The Host institution/organisation is the institution/organisation that will host the applicant.

## Eligibility Rules

In order to apply for an STSM Grant, the following criteria must be fulfilled. The applicant must:

- Set up an e-COST profile
- Be based within a research institution in a legal entity in a COST ITC or NNC
- STSM assumes a visit to a Host institution/organization for the specific work to be carried out and for a defined period of time. The Host institution/organisation is located in a different country than the applicant's country of affiliation
- Both junior and senior researchers are eligible to apply. STSM applicants must be engaged in an official research programme as a PhD Student or postdoctoral fellow or can be employed by, or affiliated to, an institution, organisation or legal entity which has within its remit a clear association with planned research
- Grantees can perform the mission anywhere in the world (as long as it serves the purpose of the STSM). The application must be submitted before the deadline of an STSM Grant call
- Special priority will be given to: Early Career Investigators, Researchers from ITCs, and gender balance



### **STSM must respect the following criteria:**

- They must have a minimum duration of 5 calendar days that includes travel
- Maximum duration is up to 3 months
- Maximum grant amount per STSM is 3000 EUR
- STSM need to be carried out in their entirety within a single Grant Period and always within the Action's lifetime
- Grants are paid by the Grant Holder after the end of the STSM and approval of all required report/documentation

### **Financial support**

An STSM Grant is a fixed financial contribution which takes into consideration the budget request of the applicant and the outcome of the evaluation of the STSM application. STSM Grants do not necessarily cover all expenses related to undertaking a given mission.

An STSM Grant is a contribution to the overall travel, accommodation, and meal expenses of the Grantee.

The COST Association and the Grant Holder of the Action cannot be considered as being an STSM Grantee's employer. STSM Grantees must make their own arrangements for all provisions related to personal security, health, taxation, social security, and pension matters.

### **How to apply for STSM:**

For information and a guide on how to apply on-line see the "Grant Awarding user guide" in COST Documents & Guidelines (<https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/12/Grant-Awarding-userguide.pdf>).

Detailed information on participants' eligibility, evaluation and selection, financial support, and grant payment procedures can be found in the Annotated Rules for COST Actions (<https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2022/12/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V1.3.pdf>)



To start the application, you must have an e-COST profile or create one. Do this by logging into the e-COST platform (<https://e-services.cost.eu/>). You will also need to add your bank details to your profile before you can start to apply for the grant.

In order to apply for the STSM the applicant should prepare an application as follows:

- Confirmation letter - Obtain the written agreement from the Host institution/organisation that the STSM applicant can perform the activities detailed in the STSM work plan on the agreed dates
- Obtain a letter of support from the Home institution/organisation
- Prepare: two-page project proposal, describing the foreseen activities, following the classical scheme: Objectives and contribution to the scientific objectives of the Action, State of the Art, STSM Work-plan, Techniques
- Full CV, including the list of applicant publications
- Complete the online application form (see <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>) and upload all requested documents

**After the STSM:** Immediately after the completion of STSM (within 15 days after the end date of the STSM), the Grantee is required to upload a Scientific Report to the e-COST platform (applicant is notified) and the Host approval containing:

- Purpose of the STSM
- Description of the work carried out during the STSM
- Description of the main results obtained
- Future collaboration with Host institution/organisation (if applicable)
- Foreseen publications/articles resulting or to result from the STSM (if applicable)
- Confirmation by the Host institution/organisation of the successful execution of the STSM
- Grantees and Host researchers commit to write a post and send pictures of the STSM for the Action webpage and social media network



Failure to submit the scientific report within 15 days from the end date of the STSM will cancel the Grant. Also, within 15 days after the STSM ending, Grantee should submit travel reimbursement claim. Grantee will receive special e-COST e-mail just for that.

The evaluation of STSM Grant applications and selection of STSM grantees: performed by the Action's Grant Awarding Coordinator and Action Grant Evaluation Committee, on behalf of the Management Committee (MC) of the Action. Applications should be in line with the action objectives and scientific activities as stated in COST Action CA20122 Memorandum of Understanding (<https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA20122/>).

Application should be linked (content wise) to one of the main activity areas of COST, concerning EU Foreign Policy: New Realities, Perception, Contestation, Communication and Relation.

Realistic budget planning is one of the major criteria for the application ranking.

Gender, geography, ESR balance and qualifications of the applicant will be taken into consideration when evaluating the proposals.

**The ranking criteria are:**

- Relevance to the aims and objectives of the Action
- Suitability of the budget requested
- Relevance to COST policies: promoting gender balance, enabling young researchers, and broadening geographical inclusiveness
- Scientific quality and originality/novelty
- Feasibility of the approach and realistic planning of the application
- Benefit of the STSM (added value for the applicant, Host and Home institutions/organisations, and COST Action Harmonis@tion)

**Questions to be addressed to the STSM Coordinator Dr. Dorina Ylli - [dorina.ylli@umed.edu.al](mailto:dorina.ylli@umed.edu.al).**



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