

COST Action AtheroNET (CA21153)

Call for STSM Grants - 2026

The COST Action AtheroNET (CA21153) (<https://atheronet.eu/>) is launching the 2026 call for Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) grants. STSM consists of a visit to a host organization located in a different country than the country of affiliation and provides a contribution for travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses. STSMs are great opportunities for researchers to share techniques and gain skills that may not be available at their home institution or laboratory, strengthening existing networks and fostering collaboration between COST Action Participants. This networking activity supports individual mobility and offers a valuable experience for Young Researchers and Innovators (YRI), as well as for the already established researchers in supporting their career development.

This call will be open for application through e-COST from **28th January to 31st March 2026** and grants will be awarded according to the selection criteria (see below). Participation of **Young Researchers and Innovators (YRI)** in STSM is particularly encouraged.

STSM for this grant period **must be completed by 15th August 2026**. Once the activity has ended, the grantee should submit the required reports and relevant documentation in e-COST within 30 days after the end date of the activity.

Glossary of relevant EC / COST acronyms:

STSM:	Short-Term Scientific Mission
YRI:	Young Researcher and Innovator (under the age of 40)
IPC:	International Partner Countries
ITC:	Inclusiveness Target Countries
NNC:	Near Neighbour Countries

STSM rules

For full information on COST STSM rules see the [Annotated rules for COST Actions](#).

- **The applicant must be engaged in an official research programme or can be employed by, or affiliated with, an institution, organization or legal entity, which has within its remit a clear association with performing research.**
- The maximal financial support is 2500 EUR and the mission duration should be **minimum one week to maximum three months**.
- **The Home Institution (where applicants are affiliated with) and the Host Institution (that will host the successful applicant) must be located in different countries.**
- The financial support is limited to travel and accommodation expenses and is **not intended to cover experimental costs**.
- Due to the limited number of fellowships, only one person per home institution and host lab can apply.
- The grantee is required to submit a short **scientific report within 30 days after their stay**.

The table below illustrates the possible scenarios for eligible STSM applicants:

Applicant's Home institution	STSM Host Institution
✓ Located in a Participating COST Full Member / COST Cooperating Member	✓ Located in another Participating COST Full Member / COST Cooperating Member / Partner Member
✓ Located in a NNC	✓ Located in an IPC / Third State
✓ Located in a recognized European RTD Organization	✓ Located in a NNC
	✓ Specific Organizations: only if the rule applies to the territory where it is vested

For definitions on the COST countries, please visit the [ANNEX I – LEVEL A: COUNTRY AND ORGANISATIONS TABLE](#)

Applications will be awarded funding according to the following criteria:

- Available **budget**.
- Scientific **quality** of the proposal.
- Potential of the STSM to generate results that will lead to the **publication** by the end of the Action.
- Technical **feasibility** (term of the STSM, host lab equipment and technical knowledge required for the development of the project).
- The proposal must fit with the **aims and goals** of the COST Action AtheroNET (CA21153).
- The host is an approved institution or laboratory actively participating in the Action AtheroNET.
- Mutual scientific **benefit** for host and home institution (*motivation and recommendation/acceptance letters*).
- Participation of PhD students and **YRIs** is particularly encouraged.

How to apply

- Applicants must create a Grant application by logging into e-COST (COST Actions) and clicking on the Grant Applications tab (<https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants>).
- The amounts granted for each individual STSM will be determined during the evaluation process. The selection of applicants is based on the scientific scope of the STSM application, which must clearly align with the overall objectives of the Action.
- Applicants must read carefully the rules detailed in the [Annotated rules for COST Actions](#).

To apply for an STSM, please follow the following steps:

1. Submit an **STSM application on e-COST** (<https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants>). To encode a new application, the applicant clicks on 'Apply for grant'.
2. The online application form contains different sections with mandatory documents:
 - 2.1. Grant Application template
 - 2.2. Confirmation by host template
 - 2.3. **One single pdf file** with supporting information:

- Motivation letter by the candidate
- Recommendation letter by the home institution
- Brief CV with a list of publications (if applicable)
- Acceptance letter from the Host Institution that the STSM applicant can perform the activities detailed in the STSM work plan on the agreed dates.

Post-STSM obligations

The grantee must submit a short **scientific report and relevant information on e-COST (STSM report template) within 30 days after the end date of the activity**. The scientific report should include a description of the work carried out during the STSM and the main achievements and planned follow-up activities.

The applicant is also responsible for acquiring an official letter from the **Host Institution formally accepting the scientific report**. This formal acceptance is necessary for approving the STSM for payment.

The grantee will also present a scientific communication describing the activities and achievements of the mission in the following AtheroNET MC/WG meeting.

The STSM grantee is requested to email a summary and a copy of their scientific report to the **Science Communication Coordinator of the Action** and Working Group 5 leader Prof. George Kararigas (atheronet@gmail.com). It will be then disseminated using the official AtheroNET website, social media, etc.

Pre-payment of 50% of the Grant (if applicable and requested) and reimbursement

The applicant can apply for a pre-payment of 50% of the Grant. This amount is subject to availability of funds and approval by the Grant Holder Institution. The request of the pre-payment shall be submitted to the Grant Holder Manager. This amount would be paid by the Grant Holder at any moment before or during the duration of the STSM, so a pre-payment is more effective for STSMs longer than 1 month. The Grant Holder needs to ensure adequate tracking of any amount pre-paid and record in e-COST the total final grant after the mission has been fulfilled.

Contact persons

- Prof. Paolo Magni (paolo.magni@unimi.it) - **Action Management Committee Chair**
- Prof. Susana Novella (susana.novella@uv.es) - **STSM Grant Coordinator**
- Prof. George Kararigas (atheronet@gmail.com) - **Science Communication Coordinator of the Action**
- Dr. Ines Potočnjak (ines.potocnjak@yahoo.com) - **Grant Holder Scientific Representative**