



## COST Action CA18102 The European Aquatic Animal Tracking Network (ETN)

### Call for Expression of Interest for Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM)

This is a continuous Call for Expression of Interest to conduct STSMs within the COST Action CA18102. We believe this will help both the COST action and the interested experts to plan and conduct STSMs.

The call will be open **from 19<sup>th</sup> April 2022** and will close 6 months before the end of the COST action, **2023-09-23**. The call will follow a bottom-up approach, having no predefined target topics. Applications will be evaluated immediately upon their submission and applicants should expect to receive a response **within 2 months** after submission.

Successful applicants will be listed under the correct grant period by the STSM committee and invited to submit the application through the eCOST platform within the corresponding grant period in due time. They will be able to start their STSM within 5 working days after submission. Successful applicants are responsible to maintain close contact with the STSM coordinator and inform them immediately should the initially planned dates for their STSM change. Failure to do so may result in cancellation of their grant. Preliminary schedule of grant periods:

GP 3: 2021-11-01 - 2022-10-31

GP 4: 2022-11-01 - 2023-09-23

#### PLEASE NOTE:

**DUE TO COVID 19, THE HOSTS AND THE PARTICIPANTS OF STSM MUST DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES, IF A STAY IS POSSIBLE! PLEASE KEEP UP TO DATE ON POSSIBLE RESTRICTIONS, ALSO IN TERMS OF TRAVEL. WE CAN IN NO WAY ACCEPT LIABILITY. AN INSURANCE FOR TRAVEL CANCELLATION IS RECOMMENDED WHEREVER POSSIBLE.**

#### Purpose of short-Term Scientific Missions (STSM)

STSM facilitates Researchers whose home institution is located in a Participating COST Full Member or COST Cooperating Member Country to go to an institution, organisation or research centre in another participating COST Country to foster collaboration and to perform empirical research. Participation of “Early Career Investigators” (ECI) in STSM is particularly encouraged. An applicant can be considered as being ECI when the time that has elapsed between the award date of the applicant’s PhD and the date of the applicant’s first involvement in the COST Action CA18102 does not exceed 8 years. PhD students are also eligible to partake in STSMs.

#### Specific information concerning STSM

STSMs can have a duration of minimum 5 days (no upper limit). The financial support is a contribution to the overall expenses incurred during the STSM and may not necessarily cover



all of the associated outgoings. Financial support is limited to cover travel, accommodation and meal expenses and is paid in the form of a Grant. No receipts will be requested as proof.

**The following funding conditions apply and must be respected:**

1. STSM must have a minimum duration of 5 calendar days that includes travel.
2. Up to a maximum of EUR 4 000 in total can be afforded to each successful STSM applicant.
4. STSM activities must occur in their entirety within the designated grant period. Since we are now in the last GP, **the report must be submitted by 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2023. This is a hard deadline, if you fail to respect it, you will not receive the grant, even if it was approved.**

Specific provisions have been introduced to enable researchers from ITC countries to request a pre-payment of 50% of their STSM Grant when they complete the first day of their STSM. In such case, the representative of the Host Institution must confirm by e-mail to the Grant Holder that the STSM applicant has officially started the mission on day 1. Only then the Grant Holder can arrange the payment of 50% of the STSM grant. The remaining 50% of the Grant is payable once the administrative requirements have been satisfied after the STSM. Preference will be given to applicants from ITC countries. The amounts granted for each individual STSM will be determined during the evaluation process by the STSM Committee.

**How to apply**

The application process in details is as follows:

1. All applicants must carefully read the funding rules detailed in Section 7 of the *COST Vademecum*. This document is available at: <https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/06/Vademecum-V9-28-April-20212-1.pdf>.
2. All applicants must register for an e-COST profile at <https://e-services.cost.eu/> - adding their bank account details to their profile.
3. The applicant must obtain a letter of invitation from the Host institution confirming that they can undertake the STSM at their premises.
5. The applicant must send their Expression of interest and the relevant supporting documents to **Dr. Polona Pengal**, STSM Coordinator to the address [etn-stsm@lifewatch.be](mailto:etn-stsm@lifewatch.be) before the application submission deadline expires.

The list of documents to be submitted in PDF format for the evaluation are:

1. The STSM **application form**. **ATTENTION:** do not submit the STSM application through the eCOST at this stage.
2. A **letter of support** from the Home Institution including contact details of applicant's own affiliation.
3. **Letter of invitation** to the applicant from a senior researcher affiliated to the Host Institution including name, postal address and e-mail address of STSM host;
4. A **full CV** (including a list of academic publications – if applicable).
5. A **contingency plan** of action in case of COVID 19 restrictions.

## Evaluation

The selection of applicants is based on the scientific scope of the STSM application which must clearly complement the overall objectives of the Action and be related to a specific Working Group. Potential applicants are encouraged to contact the WG leaders before applying to see if their STSM fits the goals of the WG/Action and to discuss the potential work plan.

The applications will then be assessed by the STSM Committee, which will perform the scientific and budgetary assessment of the applications against the perceived contribution that the proposed visit will make against the scientific objectives outlined in the Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Applicants should expect to receive a response **within 2 months** after submission of their application.

Unless specifically requested by the applicant, all received materials or parts of them, including personal information and the final report (or parts of it) of the STSM may be published on the Action website. Applicants can ask for (and justify) an embargo on information linked to their application if they wish.

The evaluation is based on a 25 points scale (25 = highest evaluation, 0 lowest evaluation) divided among 4 different criteria, as detailed below. The applicant must achieve the minimum score of no less than 60% of the maximum score (**15 points**) to be eligible for funding in COST Action CA18102.

### 1. Goals and working plan

Evaluation of the motivation letter includes an overview of the proposed activities that will be performed, relevance of the topic to be researched to the COST Action CA18102, proposed methodological approach, benefit for the applicant institution and host institution, and expertise of the proposed Host Institution. The letter must contain a work plan for the visit, highlighting the proposed contribution to the scientific objectives of the relevant WG (see the Memorandum of Understanding for a description of each WG goal) and a contingency plan in view of potential COVID 19 restrictions.

**Score:** 1-12 points (12 points = highest evaluation, 1 point = lowest evaluation)

### 2. Curriculum vitae

Evaluation of track record, publication list, experience of participation in other research projects and/or organisations specific to the COST Action CA18102.

**Score:** 1-3 points (3 points = highest evaluation, 1 point = lowest evaluation)

### 3. Research career level

Early career researchers and researchers enrolled in a PhD program can receive additional **5 points** in the evaluation in order to foster their participation. The award date of the applicant's PhD and the current position should be included in the CV.

**Score:** 0/5 (no/yes)



#### 4. Inclusiveness target countries

Applicants associated to institutions located in an ITC will receive additional **5 points** in the evaluation. ITC are: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Serbia and Turkey.

**Score:** 0/5 (no/yes)

#### Approval of the application and grant amount.

Based on the outcome of the evaluation and the proposal of the STSM Committee, the CORE Group of ETN (COST Action CA18102) will approve the application and the grant amount. The applicants will then be invited to apply through the eCOST platform within the corresponding GP when the dates of their STSM are confirmed given the current COVID restrictions.

#### Requirements after completing the STSM

Within 30 days from the end date of the STSM, the successful applicant must submit a scientific report to the COST Action CA18102 to the address [etn-stsm@lifewatch.be](mailto:etn-stsm@lifewatch.be). The scientific report should cover statement of achieving the project aims, description of the work carried out and the outcome/results, expected publications that may arise from the STSM (if applicable). A report template is available among the call documents.

All data procured with support of STSM must be upload to the ETN database before the end of the STSM by the successful applicants. Please contact Jan Reubens at [jan.reubens@vliz.be](mailto:jan.reubens@vliz.be) for support.

The successful applicant is also responsible for acquiring an official acceptance letter / Email confirmation of acceptance from a senior Researcher affiliated to the Host institution formally accepting the scientific report. This formal acceptance of the scientific report has to be sent to address [etn-stsm@lifewatch.be](mailto:etn-stsm@lifewatch.be) for archiving purposes.

In addition, the applicant will have to collaborate with the Action dissemination effort by submitting a video piece and a brief text (with photos) summarizing their stay. Specifics about the video piece will be shared in due course with the successful applicant. For any information regarding the video piece please contact [etn-comm@lifewatch.be](mailto:etn-comm@lifewatch.be).

Failure to submit the scientific report and data within 30 days from the end date of the STSM will effectively cancel the Grant. **Please note that the COST Association can request additional information to substantiate the information contained within the documents submitted by STSM applicants.**

For any questions about the STSM, please write to [etn-stsm@lifewatch.be](mailto:etn-stsm@lifewatch.be)

#### List of supporting documents:

1. Memorandum of Understanding of the COST Action CA18102
2. [COST Vademecum](https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/06/Vademecum-V9-28-April-20212-1.pdf) (https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/06/Vademecum-V9-28-April-20212-1.pdf)
3. [STSM Guidelines](https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2019/07/STSM-userguide.pdf) (https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2019/07/STSM-userguide.pdf)



4. Template for reporting
5. STSM application form