

COST Action SAGA — The Soil Science & Archaeo-Geophysics Alliance (CA17131)



First Call for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSM)

- *This is a call for applications for Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) in the framework of the COST Action SAGA — The Soil Science & Archaeo-Geophysics Alliance (CA17131), Grant Period 1*
- *Deadline for applications: January 28, 2019*
- *Missions should start from February 11, 2019 and be completed by March 31, 2019 (or April, 2019 under special conditions)*
- *The report has to be sent to the STSM Coordinator within 30 days after the completion of the STSM and in any case by April 30, 2019*
- *Please note that interested applicants should familiarise with the COST Action SAGA aim and objectives (described in the Memorandum of Understanding or MoU) and read the relevant section from the COST Vademecum to establish whether they are eligible to apply for an STSM (find relevant links in Section 7 of this document)*

1. PURPOSE OF A SHORT-TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION (STSM)

STSM facilitates Researchers from COST Countries participating in COST Action SAGA 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 an 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 SAGA does not exceed 8 years. PhD students are also eligible to partake in STSM.

STSM must specifically contribute to the research coordination and capacity building objectives of COST Action SAGA. For this Grant Period (GP) 1, STSM aiming to address the specific objectives and tasks of Working Group (WG) 1, WG 2 and WG 3 (detailed in the MoU) will be prioritised.

2. NUMBER OF STSM & BUDGET

The Management Committee of COST Action SAGA has allocated a total budget of about 5400 EUR during the Grant Period 1 of the Action. The amounts granted for each individual STSM will be determined during the evaluation process by the STSM committee.

STSM can have a duration of between 5 days and 90 days (and up to 180 days if the applicant is an ECI – see definition of ECI above). 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.

➤ Specific information concerning STSM for Grant Period 1

Given the short term of Grant Period 1, we would encourage applications for short-term missions (e.g. 5-10 days and budget up to 1800 EUR - 3600 EUR respectively).

3. HOW TO APPLY FOR AN STSM

Interested researchers must carefully read the funding rules detailed in Section 8 of the COST Vademecum (link in Section 7).

Applicants can apply by following the directions below. In addition, they are welcome to request more information or clarification on this procedure to our STSM Coordinator Kayt Armstrong (email: kate.l.armstrong@durham.ac.uk). Applications need to be submitted on or before January 28, 2019.

➤ Instructions for submitting the online application

Firstly, all applicants must register for an e-COST profile (link in Section 7). Applications for STSM are managed through the e-COST management tool. The link to the online STSM application is available in Section 7. In order to do access to the online STSM application, you need first to log in using your e-COST profile. The application for a STSM is composed of two parts:

Part 1. Online registration by the applicant — The Applicant must use the online e-COST tool to register the request for an STSM. The following information has to be encoded with the registration:

- Title of the planned STSM
- Planned dates and length of stay
- Motivation statement & description of the proposed work plan (2000 words maximum; see details below)
- Name, address & email of the prospective host at the receiving institute
- Budget request with breakdown for the costs of the STSM

Part 2. Supporting documents — The supporting documents necessary for an STSM application include the following:

- Support letter from the Home Institution
- Written agreement from the Host institution that the STSM applicant can perform the activities detailed in the STSM work plan on the agreed dates
- Full CV of the applicant (including a list of academic publications, if applicable)

After submitting the application, the online registration tool will issue a formal STSM application which will be automatically sent to the Action's STSM Coordinator.

➤ Instructions for writing the Motivation Statement and Work Plan

The maximum length of the STSM motivation and work plan summary is 2000 words. It is part of the online application form. A complete proposal should include the following sections:

1. **Aim and motivation:** Explain the purpose of the STSM and what scientific and/or other outcomes you aim to accomplish with the STSM. State which WG covers the aims of the STSM best. Very importantly, explain how the STSM aim/outcomes relate to specific scientific objectives of COST Action SAGA and specific WGs objectives/tasks. Explain your choice for the Host institution (including a description of the Host Lab expertise and link to the web, max 200 words).
2. **Methods:** Detail what methods/techniques you may learn to use, if applicable.
3. **Work plan:** Detail the steps you will take to achieve your proposed aims.
4. **Expected output** of the STSM (foreseen publications, future collaboration, etc.)

4. SELECTION OF APPLICANTS

The applications will be pre-processed by the STSM Coordinator who will then distribute a list of applications (containing an informative summary as well as the names of the home and Host institutions) to be ranked by the STSM Selection Committee (i.e. the COST Action SAGA Core Group): Chair and Vice-chair, WG leaders, STSM Coordinator and Dissemination Manager.

To guarantee a fair and objective evaluation, evaluators should not hold an affiliation with neither the home nor the Host institution of the STSM proposal in question. All applications will be evaluated, at least, by two members of the Core Group each.

Evaluation will be based on the scientific excellence of the applicant, the research proposal, and the relevance of the work plan for the achievement of COST Action SAGA objectives. There should be special considerations with respect to supporting COST policies on promoting gender balance, enabling Early Career Investigators (ECI) and broadening geographical inclusiveness.

Successful applicants will receive a Grant letter/email confirmation from the Action Grant Holder, stating the official approval of the STSM application and the granted budget. The applicant has to notify acceptance of the Grant.

5. AFTER THE STSM

The grantee is required to upload into e-COST a scientific report and Host approval of the report within 30 days after the end date of the STSM*. The scientific report will require the approval of the Action Chair or STSM Coordinator in order to effect the payment of the Grant.

The submission of the supporting documents is mandatory or the Grant is cancelled. Late submission beyond the deadline can also lead to the cancellation of the Grant. Please note that the COST Association can request additional information to substantiate the information contained within the documents submitted by STSM applicants.

Successful applicants will be asked to submit a brief summary of the STSM outputs for the Action's website describing the scientific report which will also be made available online.

**NOTE: For STSM ending close to the end of the Grant Period 1, the completion report must be returned by April 30, 2019 so that the reimbursement procedure can be completed within the budget period.*

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COST Action SAGA IN PUBLICATIONS

If work resulting from an STSM visit is published in a journal, please add the following acknowledgement: "This work/Part of this work was supported by the COST Action SAGA - The Soil Science & Archaeo-Geophysics Alliance (CA17131)."

If the work is presented in a conference or event, the COST logo must be displayed and the COST Action SAGA (CA17131) must be acknowledged.

7. LINKS TO KEY WEBPAGES & DOCUMENTS

- Website: <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA17131/#tabs|Name:overview>
- MoU (COST Action SAGA): <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA17131/#downloads>
- COST Vademecum (latest version May 2018, see Section 8, "Short Term Scientific Missions": <https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/COSTVademecum.pdf>
- Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) – User Guide: <https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/STSM-userguide-for-website-Oct-2018.pdf>
- Create e-COST profile: <https://e-services.cost.eu>
- Online application form: <https://e-services.cost.eu/STSM> (this requires of an e-COST profile)

*For further information you may contact the STSM Coordinator Kayt Armstrong
(kate.l.armstrong@durham.ac.uk)*

