

COST Action CA21107

Work Inequalities in Later Life redefined by Digitalisation (DIGI-net)

1st Call for Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM)

Grant period no. 3

Applications for Short Term Scientific Missions

occurring between

1st March 2025 and 15th September 2025

The aim of the *COST Action 21107: Work Inequalities in Later Life redefined by Digitalisation (DIGI-net)* is to overcome critical gaps in conceptual innovation on the influence of digitalisation on work inequalities in later life, in order to address the research-policy disconnect and tackle work inequalities in later life redefined by digitalisation. The Action will enhance scientific knowledge by integrating the different disciplines and schools of thought, by developing collaborations with public policy officials, international policy bodies, non-academic professionals, civil society NGOs, trade unions, management of organisations and older workers themselves.

The Action is an innovative participatory, interdisciplinary, and cross-European network. The first area concerns social inequalities in cases where some groups are privileged, and other groups are marginalised. The second knowledge gap concerns organisational age culture in which stereotypes and discrimination are known to strongly shape organisational life for older workers in terms of hiring, training and retirement. A third largely unexplored central area concerns the complex interplay and connection between digitalisation of work and older workers' health, which is a vital condition for extending working life. A fourth direction envisages policies and practices dealing with digitalisation and which are implemented by national governments, as well as by European institutions and

organisations. The fifth dimension of the CA21107 is focused on the social, corporate and news media reflecting and propelling stereotypes of older workers and digitalisation.

Purpose of a Short-term Scientific Mission

Short-term scientific missions (STSMs) are exchange visits between researchers involved in a COST Action, allowing scientists to visit an institution or laboratory in another COST Member/Cooperating Member or Near-Neighbour Country joining the Action. These scientific missions are done by researchers or innovators for specific work to be carried out and for a determined period of time: it may last from 5 days to 180 days. Their aim is to foster collaboration in excellent research infrastructures and share new techniques that may not be available in a participant's home institution or laboratory.

The grants cover expenses for traveling, accommodation, and subsistence of max. EUR 3000.

Who can apply?

- Any individual affiliated to a Legal entity according to the [Annotated Rules for COST Actions](#);
- STSM applicants shall 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 performing research. The institutions / organisation or legal entity where applicants pursue their main strand of research are considered as Home Institutions;
- COST Action CA21107 supports Young Researchers and Innovators (YRIs), which means, according to [COST definitions](#), researchers or innovators under the age of 40. The participation of YRIs in STSMs is therefore particularly encouraged, but not limited to. Other researchers are also eligible to partake in STSMs, but YRIs are prioritized when applications are evaluated;
- Priority will be given to the active members of the CA21107 with the relevant research interests in the Action topic;
- Previous successful applicants are not precluded from applying, but preference and priority will be given to applicants who have not been awarded a DIGI-net grant before.

Amount of grants

- For this call, a grantee can be afforded up to a maximum of EUR 3000;
- The financial support on offer 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 covering travel and subsistence expenses and is paid as a grant;
- For this call, the STSM's shall have a minimum duration of at least 5 calendar days, and up to 180 days, that include travel;
- STSM need to be carried out in their entirety within a single Grant Period and always within the Action's lifetime.

Note:

- During an STSM, neither the MC, nor the COST Office, nor the Grant Holder may be considered as an employer;
- Grantees must make their own arrangements for all health, social, personal security, and pension matters.

Financial issues

- Grants are usually processed only after the STSM has taken place and the reporting requirements have been satisfied and approved by the MC Action;
- 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;
- Proof of travel expenses and accommodation expenses will be required after the end of the mission;
- The Grant Evaluation Committee should consider and can approve differentiated country rates to cover accommodation and meal expenses based on the perceived cost of living in the host country;
- The maximum amounts granted for each individual STSM will be determined during the evaluation process by the Grant Evaluation Committee. The selection of applicants is based on the scientific scope of the STSM application, which must clearly compliment the overall objectives of the Action

and be related to a specific Working Group.

The following funding conditions apply and must be respected:

- For this call, a grantee can be afforded up to a maximum of EUR 3000;
- For this call, the Management Committee of COST Action CA21107 has allocated the budget for 3 STSMs;
- STSM activities must occur in their entirety within the dates specified in this call: **1st March 2025 and 15th September 2025**;
- Travel expenses cannot exceed EUR 700 (which is included in the total amount of the grant);
- For accommodation and meal expenses, the claims of applicants must not exceed the maximum amounts as per e-COST daily allowance rate table (see budget template – Annex 3);
- The amounts granted for each individual STSM will depend on the length of the stay and will be determined during the evaluation process.

Note:

- Grants are paid by the Grant Holder Institution after the completion of the activity and approval of all required report/documentation;
- STSMs grantees may request up to 50% pre-payment of the approved grant. In this case, STSMs grantees will sign an agreement between them and the Grant Holder Institution;
- This amount is subject to availability of funds and approval by the Grant Holder Institution;
- The request of prepayment shall be submitted to the Grant Holder Manager.
- Reimbursements will be done in compliance with the [COST Annotated Rules](#). The application follows the steps in e-COST.

The application steps and responsibilities

- The applicant is responsible for choosing and contacting the Host institution and for organizing the application process and sending complete applications;
- All applicants must carefully read the funding rules detailed in Annex 2 of the [COST Annotated Rules](#).

- All applicants must register for an e-COST profile at <https://e-services.cost.eu>;
- The applicants must make sure that information about their *bank account* is added to their profile;
- The application templates for grants can be found on the COST website: <https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/01/COST-Grant-Awarding-user-guide.pdf>;
- A letter of support from the **HOME** institution needs to be added (Annex 1);
- A letter of support from the **HOST** institution needs to be added (Annex 2);
- The applicant must complete and submit their STSM application online at: <https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants>;
- The applicants must also submit to the Grant Evaluation Committee, before the deadline is expired, the following documents:
 - **CV** - short format of Europass (see [Home | Europass](#));
 - The **budget** of the STSM (see budget template – Annex 3);
 - **Work plan** – should include objectives for the mission, timeline, and core tasks to be undertaken; expected outputs and deliverables specific for this COST Action and grant period (e.g., new research model; draft outline of peer review publication, thematic synthesis); the work plan should be structured with a particular research question in mind and with a view to developing work that will form the basis for a peer review publication;
 - **Support letter from the home institution** (Annex 1);
 - **Written agreement letter from the host institution** (Annex 2);
 - **Motivation letter**, highlighting the importance of the mission for this COST Action, and for the applicant's training and career.

The selection of applicants is based on the following criteria:

- A. Contribution to achievement of the COST Action 21107 MoU objectives and deliverables
- B. The compliance of the application (goals, expected outcomes) with the expertise of the coordinator from the Host Institution
- C. The gains of STSM in terms of new knowledge or access to equipment or techniques not available in the home institution
- D. Inclusiveness criteria

- E. Applicants being involved or having been involved in any type of ongoing grants under CA 21107, and not being approved yet, cannot be considered for funding.

When to apply?

The current call is open until **14th February 2025**. Applications sent after this date may be included in a later call and/or accepted only if the CA21107 budget permits.

For this call, the STSMs will take place within the period: **1st March 2025 and 15th September 2025**.

After the STSM has taken place:

The STSM Grantee has 15 calendar days from the end date of the mission:

- to send the report and documents to the e-COST and claim the payments;
- to send the report and documents to the Grant Awarding Coordinator (lavinia.andreea.bejan@gmail.com) and to a senior researcher affiliated to the Host Institution.

The required report/documentation for claiming an STSM Grant is:

- Report regarding the work developed, the main outcomes and achieved outputs of the mission, a description of future follow-up collaboration;
- Proof of travel and accommodation expenses, if they have been calculated and requested in the budget of the application;
- A ppt presentation of results for a CA21107 meeting or webinar;
- A short brief for the website and social media.

Payment of the Grant is subject to a STSM scientific report being pre-approved on behalf of the Action's MC by the delegated Grant Evaluation Committee and by a senior researcher affiliated to the Host Institution.

Written approval of the STSM scientific report by the aforementioned persons shall be uploaded in e-COST for archiving purposes.

Failure to submit the scientific report within 15 days from the end date of the STSM will effectively cancel the Grant.

NOTICE OF COMPLETION:

The Action's MC will approve the final report and send the completion notice to the Grant Holder. The Grant Holder will then execute the payment of the grant directly to the grantee.

For additional info, please contact:

Grant awarding Coordinator: dr. Lavinia Andreea Bejan, Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research, Romanian Academy, Iasi Branch

Email: lavinia.andreea.bejan@gmail.com

Grant Evaluation Committee:

It consists of Grant awarding coordinator and two members, namely:

Dr. Jim Ogg, Caisse nationale d'assurance vieillesse, Paris, France

Email: jim.ogg@wanadoo.fr

Dr. Martin Lakomý, Mendelova Univerzita V Brne, Czech Republic

Email: lakomy@mendelu.cz

Annex 1:

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM HOME INSTITUTION

- TEMPLATE -

- I, _____ (*The responsible person – typically a head of the lab - at HOME institution*)
- from _____ (*HOME Institution*),
- support the application of _____ (*applicant's name*)
- proposing to travel to _____ (*HOST Institution*)
- to realize a STSM for ____ day(s) to carry out
- the project _____ (*proposal title*).

Name of the responsible person from the home institution (typically a head of the lab)

Signature

Stamp

At ___(city)_____ (country)_____, the ___(day)___ of ___(month)_____ 20__

Annex 2:

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM HOST INSTITUTION

- TEMPLATE -

- I _____ (*The responsible person – typically a head of the lab - at HOST institution*)
- from _____ (*HOST Institution*)
- support the application of _____ (*applicant's name*)
- from _____ (*HOME Institution*)
- to realize a STSM for ____ day(s) to carry out
- the project _____ (*proposal title*).

Name of the responsible person from the host institution (typically a head of the lab)

Signature

Stamp

At ____ (city)_____, (country)_____, the ____ (day) ____ of ____ (month)____ 20__.

Annex 3: Budget Template

Instructions: complete blue cells with numbers

| | Reference | Euro/No | Notes |
|---|----------------|---------|--|
| # of Visiting Days | A | | |
| Daily Subsistence (hotel, food, local transport) | B | | as per eCOST daily allowance rates: https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2024/11/2024-Daily-allowance-table.pdf |
| Total Subsistence | C=AxB | | |
| Long distance travel cost (flight, train, bus, car) | D | | provide details |
| Other | E | | provide details |
| Total Grant Amount | F=C+D+E | | |