

COST Action CA21107

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

1st Call for Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM)

Grant period no. 4

Applications for Short Term Scientific Missions

occurring between

1 April – 15 August 2026

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 a host organization located 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 for a determined period of time. Their aim is to support capacity building and transfer of knowledge through bilateral/multilateral collaborations and support topics that can help achieving the Action MoU objectives and deliverables. The STSM grantee receives funding for implementing a project with an international team and gains new knowledge or access to equipment or techniques not available in the home institution.

The grants cover expenses for travelling, accommodation, and subsistence of max. EUR 2500.

Eligibility and selection priorities

- STSM applicants may be any individuals 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;
- STSM applicants shall be members of COST Action CA21107 *Work Inequalities in Later Life redefined by Digitalisation (DIGI-net)*;
- Preference and priority will be given to the **active members of the CA21107** with the relevant research interests in the Action topic;
- 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;
- Preference and priority will be given to Young Researchers and Innovators, which means, according to [COST definitions](#), researchers or innovators under the age of 40. COST Action CA21107 supports Young Researchers and Innovators (YRIs) and the participation of this category is particularly

encouraged. Other researchers are also eligible to partake in STSMs, but YRIs are prioritized when applications are evaluated;

- Preference and priority will be given to applicants who have not been awarded a DIGI-net grant before, although previous successful applicants are not precluded from applying;
- Applicants being involved or having been involved in any type of ongoing grants under CA21107 which have not yet been approved cannot be considered for funding.

The selection of applicants is based on the following criteria:

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

When to apply?

The current call is open until **15 February 2026**. Applications sent after this date will be rejected, yet applicants are welcome to apply again in a later call.

For this call, the STSMs will take place within the period: **1 April – 15 August 2026**.

Amount of grants

- For this call, a grantee can be afforded up to a maximum of **EUR 2500**;
- For this call, the Management Committee of COST Action CA21107 has allocated a budget for up to 6-8 STSMs.

Funding & financial issues

- STSM activities must occur in their entirety within the dates specified in this call: **1 April – 15 August 2026**;
- An STSM Grant is a contribution to the overall travel, accommodation, and meal expenses of the Grantee; STSM Grants **do not necessarily cover all expenses** related to undertaking a given mission; financial support is limited to covering travel and subsistence expenses and is paid as a grant;
- Travel expenses cannot exceed EUR 1500 (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 COST [daily allowance rate table](#) (see budget template – Annex 3);
- **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 by the Grant Evaluation Committee, depending on the length of the stay and other expenses;
- Grants are usually processed only after the STSM has taken place and the reporting requirements have been satisfied and approved by the Grant Awarding Committee;
- Reimbursements will be done in compliance with the [COST Annotated Rules](#). The application follows the steps in e-COST.

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;
- 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.

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 applicant must complete and submit their STSM application online at <https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants>;
- The grant period (start date/end date), as requested in the e-COST system, must include travel days; e.g., for a visit of 5 days, 23-27 June 2026, with 22 and 28 June as travel days, the grant period would be 22-28 June 2026;
- **The applicants must submit in the e-COST system, before 15 February 2026, the following documents:**
 - The **application form**; the templates for grants can be found on the COST website: <https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/01/COST-Grant-Awarding-user-guide.pdf>, section 1.2;
 - **CV** - Europass (see [Home | Europass](#));
 - A **letter of support/agreement** from the **HOME** institution (Annex 1);
 - A **letter of support/agreement** from the **HOST** institution (Annex 2);
 - The **budget** of the STSM (see budget template – Annex 3);
 - A **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;
 - A **motivation letter**, highlighting the importance of the mission for this COST Action, and for the applicant's training and career.
- Any **changes** regarding the grant (period, duration etc.) need to be **immediately notified** to the Grant Awarding Committee, otherwise the grant may be rejected;

- **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; **the STSM grantee must submit in the e-COST system**:
 - The **STSM report** regarding the work developed, the main outcomes and achieved outputs of the mission, a description of future follow-up collaboration; the template can be found on the COST website: <https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/01/COST-Grant-Awarding-user-guide.pdf>, section 1.2;
 - A **letter of agreement from the coordinator of the STSM** from the Host Institution attesting that that the STSM has taken place and the coordinator is satisfied with the work undertaken;
 - **Proof of travel and accommodation expenses and other expenses** that 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, and a few **photos** taken during the STSM.
- Only exceptionally, with the approval of the Grant Awarding Committee, may the additional documents be sent to the Committee, and never regarding the documents expressly required by e-COST system, which must necessarily be uploaded in the e-COST system;
- Payment of the Grant is subject to the STSM scientific report and other documentation being pre-approved on behalf of the Action's MC by the delegated Grant Evaluation Committee;
- Failure to submit the scientific report within **15 days** from the end date of the STSM will effectively cancel the Grant.

For additional info, please contact:

Grant Evaluation Committee:

It consists of Grant Awarding Coordinator and two Members, namely:

Grant Awarding Coordinator:

Dr. Lavinia Andreea Bejan, Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research, Romanian Academy, Iasi Branch

E-mail: lavinia.andreea.bejan@gmail.com

Members:

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

E-mail: jim.ogg@wanadoo.fr

Dr. Martin Lakomý, Mendelova univerzita v Brne, Czech Republic

E-mail: lakomy@mendelu.cz

Annex 1:

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM HOME INSTITUTION

- TEMPLATE -

- I, _____ (*The responsible person – typically a head of department - 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 department)

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 department - 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 department)

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		