



## Sixth Call for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSM)

This is a call for applications for STSM in the framework of the COST Action SAGA (CA17131), Grant Period 4:

- Open call: **10th December 2021**.
- The call will remain **open until 1st September 2022**.
- Proposals will be considered at first-come-first-serve basis.
- All missions must comply with any current movement restrictions, and with a written acknowledgement from the researchers and hosts that they undertake the travel at their own risk (including potentially being quarantined on their way home) and costs (if awardees get stranded abroad/ experience travel delays beyond the STSM period).
- Missions should **start from 1st February 2022** and be completed by 1st October 2022.
- The **report has to be sent to the STSM Coordinator within 30 days after the completion of the STSM**.

### What is an STSM?

A grant to visit a host organization located in a different country than the country of affiliation of the grantee. The grantee receives funding for implementing a project with an international team and gains new knowledge or access to equipment/techniques not available in the home institution.

## Who can apply?

Researchers and innovators can apply for STSM grants. 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 in-

volvement in the COST Action SAGA does not exceed 8 years. PhD students are also eligible to partake in STSM.

STSM must contribute to the research coordination and capacity building objectives of the Action, detailed in SAGA's proposal (link at the end of the document).

## How much?

Up to a maximum of EUR 4 000 in total.

An STSM Grant is a fixed financial contribution which takes into consideration the budget request of the applicant and the outcome of the evaluation of the STSM application.

STSM Grants do not necessarily cover all expenses related to undertaking a given mission. A STSM Grant is a contribution to the overall travel, accommodation and meal expenses of the Grantee.

Specific provisions have been introduced

to enable researchers from ITC participating in SAGA to request a pre-payment of 50% of their STSM Grant when they complete the first day of their STSM.

Further support to fund scientific publication in Open Access could also be granted if the publications is directly derived from STSM work funded by the Action. There are specific requirements for this funding, including the co-authorship (2 COST F/C and Partner Member ) and acknowledgement of COST Association (please contact the Action chair for more info).

## How to apply?

Interested researchers must carefully read the funding rules detailed in the ANNOTATED RULES FOR COST ACTIONS (link at the end of the document), especially in Annex 2.

Applicants can apply by following the directions below. In addition, they are welcome to request more information or clar-

ification on this procedure to our STSM Coordinator Dr Elina Aidona (email: [aidona@geo.auth.gr](mailto:aidona@geo.auth.gr)).

### Instructions for submitting the online application

Firstly, all applicants must register for an e-COST profile (link at the end of the docu-

ment). Applications for STSM are managed through the e-COST management tool. The link to the online STSM application is available at the end of the document.

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:

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
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 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 SAGA and specific WGs objectives/tasks** (check the SAGA's proposal following the link at the end of the document) . 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.

## 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. SAGA's Core Group: Chair and Vice-chair, WG leaders, STSM Coordinator and

other SAGA coordinators.

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 Grant Holder, stating the official approval of the STSM application and the granted budget. The applicant has to notify acceptance of the Grant to the Grant Holder via email ( SAGA's Chair & STSM Coordinator should be cc'd).

## 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 Core Group 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 (e.g. a short video) describing the scientific report/experience which will also be made available online.**

*\*NOTE: For STSM ending close to the end of the Grant Period 4, the completion report must be returned by 15 October 2022 the latest so that the reimbursement procedure can be completed within the budget period.*

## Acknowledgement of COST Action SAGA

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

(www.saga-cost.eu), supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology -www.cost.eu/)."

If the work is presented in a conference or other event, the oral or poster paper must clearly display the:

- **SAGA logo + SAGA's website:** [www.saga-cost.eu](http://www.saga-cost.eu)
- **COST Association and EU logos**

Please contact SAGA's Science Communication Manager (Dr Agnese Kukela: [agnese.kukela@gmail.com](mailto:agnese.kukela@gmail.com)) for more information and high resolution logo files.

## Links to key webpages and documents

- SAGA's website: <https://www.saga-cost.eu>
- COST Action SAGA proposal: <https://riojournal.com/article/31648>
- SAGA's admin site in COST Association website: <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA17131/#tabs|Name:overview>
- Annotated Rules for COST Actions: <https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/10/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-2021-11-01-1.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>

For further information please contact  
the STSM Coordinator:  
Dr Elina Aidona  
([aidona@geo.auth.gr](mailto:aidona@geo.auth.gr))



# SAGA

The Soil Science & Archaeo-Geophysics Alliance

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