

## **COST Action CA21158**

### **SMILES**

**Enhancing Small-Medium Islands resilience by securing the sustainability  
of Ecosystem Services**

## **Funded Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM):**

### **Second Open Call**

#### **Purpose of Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) under SMILES**

The main objective of SMILES<sup>1</sup> is to provide a platform for coordinated interdisciplinary research on several aspects of mapping and assessment of ecosystem services (ES) in small and medium European Islands in order to synthesize and strengthen the knowledge base for conservation of island realms and contribute to their sustainable development. Achieving this goal includes fostering collaboration across disciplines and geographic regions, with a focus on PhD students, Early Career Scholars and researchers from Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs).

There are **six working groups**<sup>2</sup> focusing on different aspect of the topic:

1. Small-medium island ecosystems: natural capital assessment
2. Ecosystem Services of Small-medium islands
3. Effects of Land use and climate changes (LU/CC) on ES
4. Nature-based solutions (NbS) for safeguarding ES of small-medium islands
5. Policy and Governance of Small-Medium Islands for ES provision
6. Dissemination, Participatory and user-centered design processes

STSMs are aimed at sustaining the production of specific tangible outputs, such as STSM reports, collaborative projects, joint publications, presentation in a COST Action Meeting or an external conference to a wider scientific community, potential stakeholders, and contacts for new collaboration. STSM are aimed also at promoting knowledge exchange, transfer of skills and techniques, increased visibility and awareness of COST Action, and networking.

<sup>1</sup> To learn more about aims and the key questions of COST Action SMILES, please look at the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) here: <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA21158/>.

<sup>2</sup> Detail of the working groups can be found here: <https://sites.google.com/view/cost-smiles/working-groups>. The applicants are advised to get in touch with the WG Leader prior to their application.

## 2. Specific information concerning STSMs

Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) consist of a visit at a host organization located in a different country than the country of affiliation by a Researcher or Innovator for the specific work to be carried out and for a determined period of time. The STSM grant provides a contribution for travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses, implementation of the project, delivery of the report to the COST Action MC and overall effort. The Grantee can perform the mission anywhere in the world. The financial support is a contribution to the overall expenses incurred during the STSM and may not necessarily cover all of the associated outgoings. Participant grants are non-commercial transactions, therefore, claims as such are not subject to V.A.T deduction. Taxes normally due or applicable with respect to the payment of the grant are not to be deducted from amounts payable to participants. It is the responsibility of each participant to ensure that all amounts that they receive from COST funding are compliant with their national tax rules and obligations.

The following funding conditions apply and must be respected:

- Up to a maximum of EUR 2000 in total can be awarded to each successful STSM applicant.
- Up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day can be afforded for accommodation and meal expenses.
- Up to a maximum of EUR 500 can be afforded for travel costs.
- The number of STSM approved and the amount granted for each individual STSM will be determined during the evaluation process by the Grant Awarding Coordinator, in cooperation with the Core Group.

STSMs must respect the following criteria:

- The Applicant and the Host institution are in different countries;
- The minimum duration is 5 days (including travel);
- There is no maximum duration, but STSM must be carried out entirely by **10 October 2023** and the duration has to be justified based on proposed activities;
- The applicant needs to show how the STSM will result in a specific deliverable that will contribute to the dissemination and visibility of the COST Action (working paper, blog post, presentation, social media contribution, etc.)

## 3. Deadline for Applications

The new deadline for applications for an STSM grant is **15 July 2023**.

## 4. Who can apply

STSM applicants must be engaged in a research program as a postgraduate student or postdoctoral fellow or be officially affiliated to a public or private institution (Home institution). Participation of Young Researchers / Innovators (<40 year old) in STSM is encouraged.

## 5. How to apply

Calls for Short Term Scientific Missions applications are periodically opened (twice a year) and published on SMILES website. In response to a call, applications are submitted on the e-COST website: <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>.

The list of supporting documents to be submitted includes:

- **Letter of invitation** from the Host Institution confirming that they can undertake the STSM on the given dates should their application be approved.



- **Letter of support** from the Home Institution.
- The **submitted STSM application form**.
- An overview of the **proposed activities** to be carried out, a **workplan** for the visit, **justification** for the choice of the Host Institution, **benefits** to the SMILES Action, benefits to the Applicant (maximum 4 standard pages).
- A full C.V. (including a list of academic publications – if applicable).

Applicants are informed that their application can be accessed by the holders of leadership positions and any evaluation Committees in AIM-COST Action for evaluation purposes.

#### 1. Evaluation criteria:

The applications will be ranked by the SMILES Action Chair, Co-Chair and the Grant Awarding Coordinator based on:

- Scientific quality of the proposal
- The scientific scope of the proposed mission
- Relevance of the mission to the scientific objectives of the SMILES Action
- Feasibility of the work plan
- The academic excellence of the candidate
- Young Researchers and Innovators from ITC<sup>3</sup> will be given priority.
- The inclusiveness criterion will be established i.e. geography, age, gender. Please, include this information if you want it to be considered in your evaluation.

The selected researchers should wait for the official invitation from the Grant Holder before booking any travel arrangements and paying fees.

#### 7. What is required after completing the STSM

The STSM Grantee has 30 calendar days from the end date of the mission to submit a scientific report to the e-COST website. Grants are paid by the Grant Holder after the completion of the activity and approval of all required report/documentation, which includes confirmation by the Host institution of the successful execution of the STSM and short (3 page-max) description of:

- Purpose of the visit (statement of the project aim(s) and objectives).
- Description of the work carried out.
- Description of the main results obtained.
- Future collaboration with host institution. Describe any likely follow-on work with the host institution arising from the visit- if applicable.
- Projected publications/articles resulting or to result from the STSM. Mention any publications that may arise from the visit - if applicable.
- Confirmation by the host of the successful execution of the mission (Provide a brief affirmation by the Host researcher -with their signature- that the STSM was carried out successfully. It can be included in the report or as a separate accompanying document)
- Other comments (if any)

The scientific report will also require the approval of the MC. Subsequently, the payment of the Grant will be made.



**Publications resulting from STSM activities should acknowledge COST Action CA21158 (SMILES) support.**

Successful applicants will be asked to submit a brief of the STSM outputs for the Action's website describing in summary the scientific report which will also be made available online. SMILES encouraged STSMs participants to participate in the Action's events with a poster to present STSMs results when applicable or when requested by the Grant Awarding Coordinator.

For any questions regarding the STSM contact Xana Álvarez: [xaalvarez@uvigo.es](mailto:xaalvarez@uvigo.es)

---

<sup>3</sup> COST Inclusiveness Target Countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Republic of North Macedonia, Republic of Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine. More information: <https://www.cost.eu/who-we-are/cost-strategy/excellence-and-inclusiveness/>