

COST
European Cooperation in Science and Technology

SENESCENCE2030
Targeting Cell Senescence to Prevent Age-Related Diseases

1st Call for Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs)

Background

The challenge to extend the human healthspan lies in preventing or alleviating age-associated diseases collectively, rather than individually. Current knowledge of cellular and molecular mechanisms identified as "hallmarks of aging" allows for experimental strategies to prevent premature aging and extend the healthspan. Evidence indicates that cell senescence is a targetable hallmark of aging, typically associated with metabolic disorders, cardiovascular diseases, neurodegeneration, and cancer.

The European Cooperation in Science and Technology ([COST.EU](https://www.cost.eu)) funds research networks called COST Actions. These interdisciplinary networks bring researchers and innovators together to investigate a chosen topic for four years.

The COST Action [SENESCENCE2030](#) (CA23119) aims to establish within Europe the concept of targeting cell senescence to prevent age-related disorders. By engaging with international partners, SENESCENCE2030 creates an interdisciplinary and intersectoral network of experts in geroscience and senescence. This facilitates the acquisition of new skills and knowledge among young researchers, medical personnel, and innovators from Inclusiveness Target Countries.

SENESCENCE2030 will highlight the socio-economic impact of therapeutic approaches and the cost-effectiveness of timely interventions. This will help define innovative processes, measures, and products impactful to industries, funders, and policymakers addressing healthcare and socioeconomic challenges related to aging.

Overall, SENESCENCE2030 will empower the transition from a disease-centered therapeutic approach to a balanced, preventive, and personalized treatment strategy. This shift aims to avoid premature aging and promote individual healthspan extension for the next decade.

With this first call, SENESCENCE2030 is offering grants of up to € 3,000 each for Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) to be completed by mid-April 2025. The STSMs can range from 5 calendar days to 70 days and are aimed to providing learning opportunities, preferably but not solely, to Young Researchers (under 40 years old) through research exchange outside their home country. The grant will be paid on successful completion of the STSM, but an advance payment of up to 50% can be paid to researchers from an Inclusiveness Target Country (ITC).

COST STSM Relevant Documents

COST Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) are institutional visits by researchers or scholars aimed at fostering cooperation and collaboration in the context of a COST Action. The host institution must be in a different country than the applicant's affiliation.

For this call, the visits should contribute to the scientific objectives of [SENESCENCE2030](#) (CA23119): "Targeting Cell Senescence to Prevent Age-Related Diseases (hereafter "SENESCENCE2030" or 'the Action'). The Action's scientific objectives are detailed in its Memorandum of Understanding and Technical Annex.

Eligibility provisions, specifics, conditions, and further information regarding COST STSMs are detailed in the [COST Annotated Rules](#) (Annexe 1 and 2, specifically) and in the COST [Grant Awarding User guide](#). Please, read these documents before applying.

Templates:

- [STSM Grant Application](#)
- [STSM Grant Report](#)

Important Dates

Open of call: November 20th 2024, 00:00 AM Brussels Time.

Application Deadline: December 20th, 2024.

Outcome Notification: Grant decisions will be communicated before **January 15, 2025.**

Mission Period: February 1 – April 15, 2025.

Duration: General: 5-70 days (subject to availability of funds)

STSM Report Deadline: Within 15 days of the STSM conclusion.

Financial Support

An STSM Grant covers travel, accommodation, and meal expenses. The grant is paid after the STSM is completed according to STSM conditions (exceptionally, ITC¹ Grantees may claim 50% after the host confirms the STSM has started).

For this call, the Action's Management Committee allocated a total budget of EUR 6,000.

Each successful applicant can receive a maximum of EUR 3,000. An approximate budget justifying the requested grant must be annexed to the application.

The daily allowance for the host institution's country, as defined in the COST Annotated Rules Countries applies: see the table of COST [daily allowance rates](#). The exact amount granted for each STSM will be determined during evaluation, the Action Management Committee (MC) can decide to approve the grant with a lower amount than requested.

The COST Association and the Grant Holder of the Action cannot to be considered as being a grantee's employer. Grantees must make their own arrangements for all provisions related to personal security, health, taxation, social security and pension matters.

Eligibility

In order to apply for an STSMs grant:

1. The applicant must be based within a research institution in a legal entity in a COST Full/Cooperating Member, Near Neighbour Country (NNC) or European RTD, see the [COST Country and Organization Table](#).
2. The applicant must 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
3. The applicant must have set up an e-COST profile by logging into the [e-COST platform](#)

¹ COST Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC) are Countries or Outermost Regions of the COST Full Members defined under 'widening participation and spreading excellence' strand of the Widening Participation and Strengthening ERA' part of Horizon Europe and associated countries as defined by the EC based on an indicator and published in the Horizon Europe Work Programme. For a current list of COST ITCs, see the [COST Country and Organization Table](#)

4. The STSM must take place in a different country to the applicant's institution.
5. The application needs to be submitted before the deadline of December 20th, 2024
6. The STSM must have a minimum duration of 5 calendar days. STSMs of longer duration are encouraged.
7. The STSM needs to be carried out in their entirety before April 15th, 2025.

Specific Provisions

1. Failure to submit the scientific report and the supporting documents within 15 days after the end date of the STSMs will cancel the grant.
2. The COST Association and the Action's Grant holder may request additional information to substantiate the documents submitted by STSM applicants.
3. The grant is payable up to 30 days after the grantee submits the report and the Action Chair (or Vice-Chair) approves the supporting documents.

Application Procedure

To apply, please follow the steps below:

1. Register for an e-COST profile at <https://e-services.cost.eu/> and add your bank details (if you are a returning applicant or have a COST profile, proceed to step 2).
2. Go to the COST website and select COST Actions and then "Grant applications" from the menu on the left. This will take you to <https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants/add>
3. Select Short-Term Scientific Missions, then the COST Action CA23119.
4. Complete the application form and upload the following:
 - a) Letter of invitation from the Host Institution, under the supervision of a senior researcher affiliated with that institution (optional: recommendation letters).
 - b) Full CV (max. 3 pages), including a list of publications if applicable (font: 12pt. Times New Roman).
 - c) Completed online "Short-Term Scientific Mission Grant APPLICATION FORM"
 - d) A detailed estimated budget to justify the required grant.
5. Submit and download your application.

Evaluation and Awarding

The evaluation of STSM applications and selection of STSM Grantees is performed by the Action's Grant Awarding Coordinator and Grant Evaluation Committee, on behalf of the Management Committee (MC) of the SENESCENCE2030 COST Action.

The selection of applicants is based on the scientific scope of the STSM application, which must clearly fit in the Action's scientific objectives.

The selection also takes into account the COST policies on promoting gender balance, enabling Young Researchers (under 40 years old) and broadening geographical inclusiveness. As well as the suitability of the proposed budget.

In some cases the Committee may ask for more information or ask the candidate to re-submit with further information or a revised budget.

Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be assessed according to the following award criteria:

- A. Relevance to SENESCENCE2030 aims and objectives (max 20 points).
- B. Scientific quality of the project (max 20 points).
- C. Scientific quality of the applicant (max 15 points).
- D. Suitability of the research environment at the host institution (max 15 points).
- E. Suitability of the budget requested (max 15 points).
- F. COST policies (max 15 points).

Proposals must achieve a minimum score of 60 points to be considered for funding.

Post-STSM Outputs

After completing the STSM, each awardee must provide:

- An STSM report on the aims, objectives, achieved results, and dissemination of the work/activities performed.
- A short (max. 3 minutes) video summarizing the STSM report, emphasizing how the STSM contributed to the grantee's career (current and planned) and to the Action.

Contacts

For queries about STSM scientific objectives, contact Grant Awarding Coordinator Prof. Francesco Beguinot: beguino@unina.it

For administrative questions or in case of special needs, email: info@biostella.it