

Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs)

YouthDMH COST Action CA23153 Call for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) – 1st Call, 2026

This Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) proposal is closely aligned with the aims of the YouthDMH COST Action CA23153, which supports a youth-centred, interdisciplinary approach to data-driven mental health research. YouthDMH brings together researchers from diverse fields—including mental health, data science, social sciences, and human-computer interaction—to develop innovative, responsible, and inclusive methods for understanding and supporting youth mental health across Europe. In this spirit, the proposed STSM aims to foster cross-sector collaboration and contribute to the COST Action’s mission of advancing responsible research practices that reflect the lived experiences and needs of young people.

1. About YouthDMH and STSMs

This is the 3rd Call for applications for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) under the [COST Action CA23153 YouthDMH – Digital Mental Health For Young People](#).

STSMs are research visits that support individual mobility and strengthen collaboration between institutions. They allow researchers to visit a host institution in another COST country to carry out research, learn new methods, access specific resources, and contribute to the goals of the Action. **A clear connection to the goals of the action is a necessary condition for an STSM application.** (Please read the [Annotated Rules for Cost Actions](#).)

Applications without a clear connection to the action will be rejected in a fast-track procedure.

In this call, YouthDMH will support **up to five STSMs**, each with a maximum grant of **EUR 4,000** to cover travel, accommodation, and subsistence. The focus for this first call is on fostering **interdisciplinary collaboration**, particularly across youth mental health, data science, social sciences, and human-computer interaction.

Please note that this is the absolute maximum and that you should request a realistic amount. Please also note that STSMs don't support research costs. The Core Group decides on the final financial contribution, taking into consideration YouthDMH's available resources, the budget requested, the scope, the duration, and the location of the STSM.

2. Who Can Apply?

As per COST regulations, STSMs are open to researchers and innovators affiliated with a legal entity (e.g. university, research centre, registered charity or SME) in a COST Member or Cooperating Country, or from a European RTD organisation.

We particularly welcome applications from:

- **PhD students, early-career researchers, and young researchers and innovators (under the age of 40)**
 - Researchers from **Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs)**¹
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3. Scope and Duration

STSMs must involve a **short research visit** of several days and up to one month, and must be **completed by 1 September 2026**.

Eligible activities include (but are not limited to):

- Developing new interdisciplinary collaborations
- Conducting pilot studies
- Accessing data, methods, or equipment not available at the home institution

¹ The current list of ITCs include: Albania, Armenia, 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, Türkiye and Ukraine. Read more at <https://www.cost.eu/about/strategy/excellence-and-inclusiveness/>

- Advancing work that contributes to the aims of YouthDMH
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4. Application Process

Applications must be submitted through the **e-COST** platform. Applicants must:

- **Have or create a profile in e-COST**
- Submit a completed STSM application including the following documents (in one PDF):
 - **Brief CV** (max 2 pages)
 - **[Application for Grant](#)** filled in on e-COST and downloaded from the system (including STSM title, start and end date, information about the host Institution and contact person, and the budget requested by the Applicant).
 - **Application form for STSM proposal** (objectives, methodology, relevance, expected outcomes, check <https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/12/STSM-application-template.docx> for the template)
 - **Motivation letter** summarizing the main scientific goals, as well as its relevance for the applicant, home/host institutions, the YouthDMH Action (1 page maximum)
 - **Confirmation of the host institution** is an invitation or agreement letter from the host institution, signed by the host and the institution's legal representative. The letter must clearly show the institution's acceptance of the proposed period for the visit and of the proposed work plan of the applicant.
 - ***Letter of Support** is necessary by a senior researcher from the home institution, *only if you are a PhD student and / or a research assistant.

Further guidance is available in the [Grant Awarding User Guide](#) on the COST website.

5. Evaluation and Selection

Each proposal will be reviewed by **two members of the YouthDMH Core Group**, using the following criteria, each scored on a **1–5 scale**:

- Scientific quality and clarity of the proposal (weight: 1)
- Relevance to the aims of YouthDMH (weight: 2)

- Interdisciplinary collaboration potential (weight: 2)
- Feasibility and planning (weight: 1)
- Benefit to the applicant and host (weight: 1)

The selection of successful STSM applications is based on the scientific scope of the proposed mission and, most importantly, how the mission supports YouthDMH in achieving its scientific objectives.

Gender balance, career stage, and the distribution of STSMs among different countries will also be considered. The Core Group has the right to award less than the requested amount.

The STSM Applications will be approved by the Core Group (Grant Awarding Coordinator, Action Chair, Action Vice Chair, Grant Holder Scientific Representative, Science Communication Coordinator, and Working Group leaders) on the basis of the perceived contribution that the participation will make to the scientific objectives outlined in the Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

If needed, evaluations may be delegated to Management Committee (MC) or Working Group (WG) members with specific expertise.

Applications are due on **28 February 2026**. Decisions will be announced by 12 March.

Once the selection process is complete, the applicant receives a formal notification through e-COST informing him/her about the outcomes of the selection and whether the request has been approved or not.

If the application is funded, the applicant receives a Grant Letter stating the approved amount and the conditions for receiving the Grant. The applicant cannot in any case start his/her mobility period before having received the Grant Letter.

6. After the STSM

Grantees must submit a short final [scientific report](#) within **30 days** after the end of the STSM or by **30 September 2026** (whichever comes first).

The report (using the official COST template², max 1000 words) should include:

- Purpose of the STSM.
- Description of the work carried out during the STSM.
- Description of the main results obtained.
- Foreseen publications/articles resulting from the STSM (if applicable).

² https://www.cost.eu/STSM_Report

The applicant is also required to upload a confirmation letter from the host institution stating the successful achievement of the foreseen goals (with the signature of the local supervisor and/or legal representative).

The report must be submitted through the e-COST platform within 30 days after the conclusion of the STSM. Failure to submit the scientific report within 30 days will effectively cancel the grant.

The payment of the grant will be executed after approval of the scientific report by the Grant Holder Manager.

7. Contact

For questions or assistance related to the application procedure and organization of the STSM, please contact:

Grant Awarding Coordinator: Paweł W. Woźniak, TU Wien, Email: pawel.wozniak@tuwien.ac.at

For questions related to the YouthDMH objectives, please contact:

Action Chair / Vice Chair – Andreas Balaskas, Email: andreas.balaskas@ucd.ie / Maurice Mulvenna md.mulvenna@ulster.ac.uk

For questions related to the e-COST, Grant Letter, and financial matters, please contact:

Action Grant Holder Manager - Jennifer Kelly, Email: jennifer.kelly@ucd.ie