**COST Action Alien CSI (CA17122)**

**Short Term Scientific Missions**

**Call Date No. 2: December 2018**

The COST Action Increasing understanding of alien species through citizen science (Alien CSI) will explore and document approaches to establishing a European-wide Citizen Science Alien Species network. It will embrace relevant innovations for data gathering and reporting to support the implementation of monitoring and surveillance measures, while ensuring benefits for society and citizens, through this network. (<http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/ca/CA17122>).

Alien CSI promotes Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) to facilitate knowledge exchange and acquisition, and to implement action objectives, by fostering collaboration, technology transfer and by tackling various research needs.

*Who is eligible to take part in STSM*?

Participation of ‘Early-Careers Investigators’ (ECIs) 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 involvement in the COST Action does not exceed 8 years. PhD students are also eligible to partake in STSMs. Other applicants must be employed by or affiliated to an institution or legal entity which has within its remit a clear association with performing scientific research. STSMs are not available to BSc/MSc students with no additional affiliation to an organisation/research centre.

The Home Institution is the institution/organisation where the STSM applicant holds their primary affiliation as registered on their C.V./e-COST profile, and where they are currently performing their main strand of research. The Host Institution is the institution/organisation that will host the successful applicant. Both the home institution and the host institution should be located in a participating COST Action Country or Cooperation State. Please visit the Action's page on the COST website for the most up-to-date information about which countries and organisations are taking part in the Action.

<http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/ca/CA17122?management>

*Duration for STSMs*

STSMs must be carried out in a COST country other than the applicant’s.: for PhD students and other applicants, between 5 working days and 3 months, to a maximum award of € 2,500, and for early stage researchers up to 6 months, to a maximum award of € 3,500. STSM awards may be combined with other funding sources, but these must be acknowledged in the application. Please note that the final 50% award will be given only after the STSM has been completed – therefore the applicant must have approval and prior financial support from their own institution. Specific provisions have been introduced to enable researchers from ITC (Inclusiveness Target Country; please visit the following page for the complete list of ITC <http://www.cost.eu/about_cost/strategy/excellence-inclusiveness> ) participating in the COST Action to request a pre-payment of 50% of their STSM Grant when they complete the first day of their STSM. In such case, the representative of the Host Institution must confirm by e-mail to the Grant Holder that the STSM applicant has officially started the mission on Day 1. The remaining 50% of the Grant is payable once the administrative requirements have been satisfied after the STSM. **The STSM must be completed before April 15th 2019.**

*The application process is as follows:*

1. Applicants must carefully read the funding rules detailed in Section 8 of the COST H2020 Vademecum. www.cost.eu/download/COSTVademecum

2. Applicants must submit an application using e-COST https://e-services.cost.eu/user/login/STSM.

If you do not already have an e-COST account you will first need to 'create an account' - which will include providing the details of the bank account into which a grant would be made if an STSM application is approved and the STSM completed successfully.

3. Applicants must obtain a letter of invitation from the Host Institution confirming that they can undertake the STSM on the given dates prior to submitting an application.

4. Applicants must complete, submit and download their STSM application online at: https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm.

5. Applicants must send their application form and the relevant supporting documents for evaluation, to submit a proposal by e-mail to Dr. Frances Lucy ([lucy.frances@itsligo.ie](mailto:lucy.frances@itsligo.ie)), Dr. Lori Lawson ([l.lawson-handley@hull.ac.uk](mailto:l.lawson-handley@hull.ac.uk) ), Dr Laura Verbrugge ([l.n.h.verbrugge@utwente.nl](mailto:l.n.h.verbrugge@utwente.nl) ) and Dr. Elena Tricarico ([elena.tricarico@unifi.it](mailto:elena.tricarico@unifi.it)) before January 11 2018.

*The list of supporting documents to be submitted for the evaluation are:*

• Letter of invitation to the applicant from a senior Researcher affiliated to the Host institution

• The submitted STSM application form (downloadable when the online application is submitted - see 4 above)

• A motivation letter including an overview of the proposed activities that will be performed which must contain a plan of work for the visit, highlighting the proposed contribution to the scientific objectives of the Action. Also the host's scientific expertise for the potential achievements of the STSM's aims should be indicated. Maximum 8 pages, the font should correspond to Times New Roman size 12 pt with single line spacing and standard margins of 2 cm

• A letter of support from the Home Institution;

• A Full C.V. (including a list of academic publications – if applicable).

*Evaluation criteria*

Each proposal will be assessed independently by the COST committee and an evaluation score will be given considering the proposal clarity, relevance for the Action, feasibility, planning and outputs. The proposal will be assigned to one of the following categories:

1 - **Very poor**: proposal illogical and not understandable. Not clearly linked to any WG. (0-10 marks)

2 – **Poor**: proposal with limited understanding, planning and no clear objectives. Weakly linked to at least one WG. (10-25 marks)

3 – **Fair**: proposal with some understanding, planning and objectives. Moderate links to at least one WG. (25-35 marks)

4 – **Good**: good proposal but needs input to develop feasible STSM. Well linked to at least one WG. (35-50 marks)

5 – **Excellent**: proposal well designed in terms of planning, feasibility and projected outputs. Strongly linked to at least one WG. (50-60 marks)

Extra marks will give for links with a WG of the Action (score comprised between 0 and 4: no link-strong link) and the output value to the COST Action via development of research, scientific networks and information technologies (score comprised between 0 and 24: no value-high value). A proposal can reach a maximum score of 100. The proposals will be ranked and those with the highest scores will be financed, subject to the duration of the STSM applications and the available budget. The results will be published in the COST Action website.

*Evaluation outcome*

Within one month of the deadline.