



COPYTREE - COST Action CA21157

European Network for Innovative Woody Plant Cloning

12th CALL for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs)

Missions during the period 19th January – 6th October 2026

Submission of applications in e-COST from 28.11. to 28.12. 2025

Notification of decisions to applicants 13.1. 2026

Would you like to visit a laboratory or work together with scientists in another country? By doing so, could you learn something new or have an access to special devices of infrastructure not available at your home institution but needed in your research work? Or do you need special support to work on-line with international colleagues?

If you are interested, please read carefully the instructions, and when applying check that you have uploaded all the required documents!

Applications with missing documents cannot be financed

Zoom-info "How to make a good STSM application?" on 9.2.2024 at 11am (CET):

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/vDCDNZNZINBdWWQo5pw0BU4aWFqXMvBDe1BFiDX-ezKGQwCITs_SlmUwb8QrXh9R.2UNyrjdr1Rsv6dz2

Passcode: Bn2mqx5!

What is a STSM?

Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) are research visits supporting individual mobility, strengthening existing networks and development of novel collaborations between COST Action Participants. STSMs can be across disciplines and different sectors (e.g., academia and industry / SMEs) with possible impact on the applicant's career development. STSM can also be Virtual Mobility (VM).

STSMs should specifically contribute to the scientific objectives of the CopyTree, and at the same time provide an applicant an opportunity to learn new techniques or methods, gain access to specific facilities, instruments or data that are not available in the applicant's own institution/organization. For the host, STSM provides an opportunity to strengthen networks and research, develop new collaborations, and fully utilize research infrastructures and devices. A successful STSM is beneficial to both the visitor and the host, and the STSM outcomes (e.g. publications, joint proposals/ (funded) projects) contribute to the visibility and impact of the CopyTree.

According to the COST rules, STSM is **a visit to a host organization located in a different country** than the country of applicant's affiliation. The duration of the visit can vary **from five to 90 days**.

Virtual Mobility (VM) is collaboration in a virtual setting among researchers or innovators within the CopyTree, to exchange knowledge, learn new techniques, etc. Examples of VM activities are:

- Virtual mentoring scheme, with generation of capacity building and new skills, particularly for Young Researchers and Innovators.
- Harmonisation and standardisation of methods and procedures within the CopyTree activities, e.g. setting up a survey amongst all CopyTree members to collect different results and outcomes; coordinating the discussions to create common protocols; preparing questionnaires and response scales to be used by the CopyTree members as part of virtual networking activities.
- Implementation of research coordination related activities that do not necessarily require in-person presence, e.g. computational or modelling activities; data analysis of the CopyTree Action for a specific report or activity.

STSM expenses for which you can apply CopyTree support

STSM is a grant awarded to individuals, **not intended to cover employment costs**. **Grants contribute to travel, accommodation, subsistence expenses and implementation**. Additional co-funding of the visit e.g. from the host-institution or from other sources is not required, but if available, should be specified in the application. The application should include a requested amount, ideally with approximate budget for travel, accommodation, and other costs such as consumables or any other relevant costs. Ultimately, funding for successful applicants will be determined by the CopyTree Core Group, depending on duration of stay, location and other parameters, **up to a maximum of 4 000€**.

Virtual Mobility Grant contributes to the overall effort if it is not covered by the applicant's employer or the Grant Holder Institution. This needs to be specified in the application. The funding is determined by the CopyTree Core Group, depending on the duration, scope and complexity of the task and activities covered by the grant, **up to a maximum of 1500€**.

Participant grants are non-commercial transactions, therefore, claims as such are not subject to V.A.T deduction. 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.

Who can apply?

PhD students, postdocs, or permanent researchers from an institution affiliated in a COST member country or Near Neighbour Country. Special attention will be given to applications by young applicants (under 40 years of age) and for visits from or to Inclusiveness Target Countries.

The COST Inclusiveness Target Countries are as follows:

| EU Member States | EU Member States Outermost Regions ⁴ | Full Members that are not EU Member States |
|---|---|---|
| Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary ⁵ , Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia | French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Mayotte, Reunion Island and Saint-Martin (France), Azores and Madeira (Portugal), and the Canary Islands (Spain) | Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, Ukraine |

5: Following the CSO decision of the 16 October 2023, considering the new guidance from the European Commission, as of 1 November 2023 until further notice, individuals from universities maintained by public interest trusts established under Hungarian Act IX of 2021 and concerned by the Council Implementation Decision 2022/206 are allowed to participate in COST activities without receiving financial support from the COST Association (either grants or via reimbursements)

The host institution can be affiliated in a COST member country, Near Neighbour Country or International Partner Country. The Near Neighbour Countries include Algeria, Azerbaijan, Egypt, the Faroe Islands, Jordan, Kosovo, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Tunisia.

Applications must specify an alignment with one of the CopyTree working groups:

WG1: Recalcitrance

WG2: Diagnosis, sanitation and conservation

WG3: Scaling up and automation

WG4: Technological risk assessment, public acceptance, legislation and commercialization

WG5: Communication, dissemination and technology transfer

How to apply?

Applications are submitted via e-COST. To start the application, **you must have an e-COST profile** at e-COST platform (<https://e-services.cost.eu/>). You will also need to add your bank details and a CV to your profile before you can start the application. Then:

- 1) Go to <https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants>
- 2) Click on “Apply for a grant”.
- 3) On the grants page, choose Short-Term Scientific Mission grant or Virtual Mobility grant > Continue.

- 4) For COST Action, choose “CA21157 – European Network for Innovative Woody Plant Cloning”.
- 5) **Fill in the required information and upload your documents.** The required documents are
- **Letter confirming the host institution can host the applicant** to perform the activities detailed in the STSM work plan on the agreed dates (not required for Virtual Mobility), and that the total STSM budget applied, and its allocation is realistic for realization of the STSM. Please note that your STSM needs to fit into the host’s timetables and other on-going research, so it is important to agree with the host on the content and division of the potential extra costs.
 - **Applicant’s CV (obligatory) and a list of academic publications** (if applicable)
 - **For PhD students, a letter with supervisor’s opinion** on the relevance of the STSM/VM to the student’s studies and suitability of the applicant
 - **Application form** (template available on e-COST) describing (**Please keep your text within given word limits!**):
 - Goals: Purpose and summary of the STSM/ VM
 - Working Plan: Description of the work to be carried out by the applicant, including concise material and methods, timetable
 - Expected outcomes and contribution to the CopyTree objectives and deliverables, alignment to CopyTree Working Group(s)
 - **Budget plan.** Please upload an Excel table, which summarizes the budget requested, together with allocation and reasoning for the costs.

More information on submission of application in e-COST in the Grant Awarding User Guide, see: <https://www.cost.eu/funding/documents-guidelines/>

Note that applications will be evaluated based on the information given by the applicant. It is advisable to see evaluation criteria and ensure that all the necessary information has been presented, with enough details to support your application.

Evaluation of applications

The CopyTree Core Group will evaluate the applications received before the deadline of the call, and decide on the granted sum. The evaluation criteria given below will be followed, and a minimum of score 15/20 for relevance to CopyTree objectives and overall score 75/100 will be required for funding.

In addition, also COST policies such as promoting gender balance, enabling Young Researchers and broadening geographical inclusiveness will be taken into account when deciding STSMs to be funded. Active participation to CopyTree community platform (www.copytree.eu) is considered positive for applicant.

The granted budget may differ from the applied one, considering realistic costs in the host country. The applicant can receive a Grant from CopyTree only once in a grant period, and not being among the grantees in the previous grant periods is considered positive for application.

| Evaluation criteria | Max points | Check that in the application.. |
|--|------------|--|
| Relevance to Copytree objectives: demonstrates an understanding of the aims of Copytree; shows relevance to scientific objectives and tasks within at least one of the Working Groups | 20 | .. you have described the goals of your STSM, and tell to which Copytree WP your STSM is related, and how it contributes to Copytree objectives |
| Scientific quality of the project: feasibility, originality, achievability and potential impact | 20 | .. you have described the research question or other goal and the work you are going to do: material (species, genotypes, where you get material), methods (treatments to be tested, measurements, observations, analyses to be done), timetable, expected outcomes and their significance |
| Scientific quality of the applicant: skills and experience of the applicant, academic CV, and for PhD students, supervisor's opinion | 20 | ..you have submitted your CV and publication list, and if you are a PhD student, your supervisor's letter |
| Research environment at the host institution: methodology available, complementarity between host and applicant background | 20 | .. you have described why the host is a good host for your STSM (e.g. if host has special knowhow / expertise / device / facilities you don't have access otherwise etc..), and that you have submitted host's letter to confirm your visit |
| Budget requested: a plausible and well-planned budget that is sufficient to cover expenses while demonstrating value for money | 20 | ..you have submitted a budget table containing also reasoning for the costs (good to check the budget first with the host e.g. to have realistic and reasonable accomodation costs) |

Reporting and payment of the STSM

Once the activity has ended, the grantee needs to submit the required documentation in e-COST within 30 days after the end date of the mission; **but at the latest by the 23rd October 2026, Failure to submit the report in e-COST within the required deadline will cancel the grant.**

We also want to present the realized STSMs on CopyTree web pages and in our Newsletters. The grantee is expected to submit information required to Newsletter following the timeline given by the Newsletter editor. Further, if you don't want your STSM report to be placed on the CopyTree web as such, please provide a separate public report describing your STSM (one A4 page including the title, name of the grantee and general description of the STSM and its results). We also welcome all additional material (e.g. a short video, photos or PowerPoint) presenting the STSM on CopyTree web pages and social media.

The payment is claimed by submitting the report via e-COST using the template provided on e-COST: The required documentation for claiming a STSM Grant is **a scientific report on the work developed, including the main achievements of the STSM and planned future follow up activities.**

At the end of the Grant Period, all the young STSM grantees (under 40 years) will compete for oral presentation slots at the 2026 CopyTree Conference based on the submitted STSM reports. Depending on the resources available, the 1-3 best STSMs are selected to be presented at the Conference with the grantees being reimbursed. If the grantee does not want to participate to this competition, he/ she should let the Grant Awarding Coordinator to know it.

Grants are paid by the Grant Holder Institution after the completion of the activity and

approval of the required report. However, STSMs grantees may request a pre-payment of up to 50% of the total grant in advance. This is payable under 2 conditions: that the GH Institution has sufficient funds to cover 50% of the grant in advance and that the host confirms to the GH Manager that the mission has started. The request of prepayment shall be submitted to the Grant Holder Manager (Lucie Fischerová, fischerova@ueb.cas.cz).